DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 170 087 RC 011 301

AUTHOR Edington, Everett D.
TITLE Synthesis of Research Related to Policy for Education in Rural America.
PUB DATE Apr 79
NOTE 8p.; Prepared for presentation at the American Educational Research Association Meeting (San Francisco, California, April 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Role; Comparative Education; *Educational Policy; Federal Government; Federal State Relationship; *Government School Relationship; Interagency Cooperation; *Rural Education; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS ERIC; National Institute of Education; *Office of Education

ABSTRACT

Until recently other countries (Australia, Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries) have been well ahead of the United States in development of rural education policy, In 1969 and again in 1977 the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) produced task force reports with recommendations for rural education. The 1969 recommendations were very specific and concerned early childhood education, vocational education, institutional cooperation, funding guidelines, technical assistance for rural program planning and development, establishment of a rural unit within USOE, and creation of a rural programs research and design center. Broader in scope, the 1977 recommendations dealt with rural, migrant, Native American, and Bilingual/Bilcultural education. The report also acknowledged the effect on education of rural cultural tradition. Except for improved vocational education (largely a matter of state policy) and the ERIC program, there has been neither implementation of the recommendations nor much HEW effort regarding ongoing funding of rural education programs. The U.S. rural education policy has remained one of trying to fit all school systems into a single mold. However, cause for hope now exists in that rural education is an NIE priority for fiscal 1980; the Department of Agriculture and USOE are planning activities; and there is now some cooperation among federal agencies. (SB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED170087

SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH RELATED TO POLICY FOR EDUCATION IN RURAL AMERICA

Everett D. Edington

Director

ERIC® Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools

New Mexico State University

Prepared for presentation at the American Educational Association Research Annual Meeting, San Francisco

April 1979

Session 8.27

RC 011301

SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH RELATED TO POLICY

FOR EDUCATION IN RURAL AMERICA

I find myself in the same dilemma that I was in in a similiar situation about four years age. Jonathan Sher had asked me to write a paper for the first conference of "Rural America", which would describe the policy of the federal government toward rural education. There was no such policy in existance. Some of the sponsors of the conference were, rightfully, disturbed because the paper presented at that time had very little to do with this topic of discussion. To day I find myself in the same situation where my paper will have little to do with a synthesis of research for policy in rural education.

Until very recently other areas of the world have been well ahead of the United States in attempting to develop policy for rural education. An excellent example is the cooperative activity of the INTERSKOLA group composed of educators from the Scandanavian countries and the British Isles, who for over 12 years have met annually to discuss and develop plans for policy formation in their respective countries, (International Conference on Education in Sparsely Populated Areas; 1974). Australia has for years recognized the problem inherent with the education of isolated children and at the federal and provincial levels developed policy to programs to meet the special needs of rural people. Our policy in this country has been one of attempting to fit all school systems into one mold. In other words, we have a

policy to not have a specific policy for education in rural areas.

One of the earliest policies related to rural education was in relation to pupil transportation. By 1869 Massachusetts enacted a law authorizing the spending of public funds to carry children to and from school. By 1900, 18 states had pupil transportation laws and by 1919 it was legal in each of the 48 states. (Gordon 1972)

Two task force reports on policy toward rural education have been produced by the U.S. Office of Education in the past ten years. There were the "Report of the Task Force on Rural Education" (1969) and "The Report to the United States Office of Education of the National Task Force on Institutional Strategies on Schools With High Concentration of Low Income Pupils" (1977).

Some of the major recommendations of the 1969 report are as follows:

1. That nursery schools and kindergartens be made universally available and that USOE further such development including the providing of funds. It was also felt that OE should make sure that parental involvement exists in all early childhood programs for which it provides funds.
2. Existing vocational education programs be strengthened in rural areas. The agriculture program should be broadened and that OE should foster establishment of more regional technical schools. Work study programs need to be a part

of every rural school system.

3. The Office of Education should require appropriate cooperative arrangements between rural school systems and institutions of higher education or other training agencies which its funds are supporting.
4. Any program which depends on or requires the submission of proposals or similiar applications for funds should reserve a definite portion of the available monies for rural applicants.
5. The Office of Education should consider grants of funds to groups or rural school systems as an incentive toward the creation of cooperative arrangements among them.
6. The Office of Education should provide technical assistance for rural program planning and development to the State Department of Education and multi-district organizations.
7. A rural unit should be established in OE.
8. OE should create a center to research and design programs in rural education.

There is little evidence that the policy recommended by the 1969 task force was implemented. An exception may be in vocational education where a number of area technical schools are located in rural areas. This was generally a state decision rather than a federal policy.

The 1977 report included recommendations on urban, rural, migrant,

Native American, and Bilingual/Bicultural education. It recognizes that the cultural traditions of rural society adds to existing difficulties in the education of rural pupils. The specific recommendations of this report are as follows:

1. It is recommended that a results-oriented school management system be adopted to improve the achievement of the rural pupil.
2. It is recommended that the rural pupil assessment programs be broadened to include the assessment of pupils' essential skills in communication, mathematics, and career development. Reference tests should be used to determine whether or not essential objectives have been achieved.
3. It is recommended that the curriculum in rural schools be structured on a competency-based approach. Federal programs dealing with basic skills should be extended beyond the primary grades into the middle grades and the high school years.
5. It is recommended that rural educators use a greater variety of teaching methods, approaches, and materials, as well as increased task orientation. This would assist rural youth, particularly the poor, to master basic skills.
6. It is recommended that the home, the school, and the community work together closely in the education of rural children.

It is worthwhile to note that the recommendations of the two reports are of an entirely different nature. The 1969 report deals

with much more specific recommendations than the 1977 report. Little, if any, implementation has taken place however.

With the exception of the ERIC program in NIE there has been little substantial effort in HEW toward ongoing funding of programs related to rural education. There does seem to be some hope, however, with NIE specifying that rural education will be one of its priorities this next fiscal year and the planning activities presently being funded by the Office of Education. The Department of Agriculture also has activity for development of education in rural areas. Most promising is the cooperation between the federal agencies at least at the lower management levels.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gordon, Edmund W., Ed. Special Issue Busing NCRIEEO Newsletter. Volume 3, number 2, May, 1972. ERIC ED 064441.

International Conference on Education in Sparsley Populated Rural Areas, Interskola Golspie, 1974. Aberdeen College of Education, Scotland. ERIC ED 101913.

Report of Task Force on Rural Education. Office of Education (DHEW), Washington D.C., 1969 ERIC ED 051921.

The Report to the U.S. Office of Education of the National Task Forces on Instructional Strategies in Schools with High Concentrations of Low Income Pupils. Optimum Computer Systems, Inc., Washington D.C. 1977. ERIC ED 139900.